

SHAME!

Republicans Twist Arms on House Floor to Pass Energy Bill

Washington, DC - Rep. Louise M. Slaughter (D-NY), Ranking Member of the House Rules Committee, responded today to the Republican Leadership's deliberate attempt to thwart the will of the American people and to undermine the democratic process during a vote on the Gasoline for America's Security Act.

"Once again, on an issue of critical importance to the American people, the Republican Majority has chosen to trample the democratic process and manipulate the outcome of a vote on the Floor of the House of Representatives, after the vote was completed."

"This is an unethical subversion of our democracy. The Republican Leadership has brought shame on themselves and the House of Representatives."

"Today, we all see how the Republican culture of corruption has destroyed the

credibility of this government and directly impacts the lives of each and every American."

Rep. Mike Simpson (R-ID), Speaker Pro-Tempore of the House, held open a five-minute vote on HR 3893, the Gasoline for America's Security Act, for over forty minutes. For nearly all of that time, Republicans were unable to produce a majority vote in favor of the bill. Rep. Simpson repeatedly stated that he was using his discretion to hold the vote open until all Members had voted. But as soon as Republicans had gained the needed number of votes to pass the Act, he closed the vote. The final vote total was 212 to 210.

BACKGROUND:

The Republican Leadership abuses its power in the chair, and holds votes open for the sole purpose of reversing the outcome of the vote on a regular basis. On **five separate occasions in the 108th Congress alone**, votes were held open beyond the traditional 17-minute limit in order to overturn the will of the majority. These votes include the infamous 3-hour Prescription Drug vote in November 2003, which went far beyond any previous vote and broke all records in the history of electronic voting. By comparison, in 1987, the Republicans excoriated the Democratic Leadership for holding a vote open for only 30 minutes.

Before the Republican Leadership took over in 1995, votes were usually held open simply to decide what the next business should be on the House floor. This occurred **after** the outcome was already determined. Below is a chronological record of lengthy votes going back to 1987, and the time each vote was held open. "Arm-twisting" votes are noted by asterisks.

109th Congress

October 7, 2005 **

H.R. 3893-Gasoline for America's Security Act vote began at 1:57 pm (a five minute vote) and was gaveled down at 2:43 pm) vote #519. **46 minutes (for a 5-minute vote)**

July 27 & 28, 2005 (legislative day of July 27, 2005)**

H.R. 3045-CAFTA the vote started at 11:00 pm on the 27th and went on until 12:03 am) Vote #443. **63 minutes**

Previous Congresses

July 8, 2004**

Sanders amendment on PATRIOT Act to FY 2005 Commerce-Justice State Appropriations bill. **38 minutes.**

March 30, 2004**

Motion to instruct conferees on PAYGO on the FY 2005 Budget Resolution. **28 minutes (on 5-minute vote).**

November 22, 2003**

Final Passage of the Conference Report on HR 1, the Prescription Drug bill. **3 hours.** (during this time frame, former Rep. Nick Smith claimed to have been offered a bribe by then Majority Leader Tom DeLay, which ultimately lead to DeLay's formal admonishment by the Ethics Committee)

June 26, 2003**

Final Passage of HR 1, the Prescription Drug bill. **50 minutes.**

March 20, 2003**

Final Passage of Budget Resolution. **26 minutes.**

July 12, 2001

Campaign Finance bill. This was a "time out" to determine what was to occur next on the floor. **130 minutes.**

October 9, 1997**

Passage of FY 1998 DC Appropriations bill. **33 minutes.**

Longest Votes Prior to the Republican Majority in the House

October 3, 1994

Time out to accommodate numerous changes in the floor schedule. **44 minutes.**

August 19, 1994

Time out to determine what to do next on Crime bill. 73 minutes.

October 14, 1993

Time out to determine floor schedule after rule on unemployment was defeated. **65 minutes.**

October 29, 1987**

Final passage of Reconciliation bill. **30 minutes.**